

Multiple Intelligences and Dance Education for Young Children

Research Distinction Thesis

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By

Kerry Dibble

The Ohio State University

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Project Advisor: Professor David Covey, Department of Dance

Kerry Dibble

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David Covey, Jill Nee

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Abstract

The goal of this project is to become more informed about how young children learn dance and how to better prepare and conduct movement classes to serve diverse styles of learning. When children partake in recreational dance classes, particularly at an early age, they are taught specific dance steps and movements. The format in which this artistic and technical information is given, however, is not always accessible to children who learn in various ways. I designed a series of seven creative movement dance classes for this study, each based around a different way of learning and around my inquiries surrounding the learning methods of children. Each mode of learning represents one of the “Seven Intelligences,” as described Howard Gardner’s research on multiple intelligences (Gardner, 2006): visual/spatial intelligence, body/kinesthetic intelligence, verbal/linguistic intelligence, intrapersonal intelligence, interpersonal intelligence, musical/rhythmic intelligence, and mathematical/logical intelligence. Conducting this study provided insight on how the youth responded to each lesson, and how that could affect how other students would respond as well. Compiling these results and the lesson plans utilized for this study into a journal informs dance educators how young children learn in a dance class and how those classes can be better catered toward different ways of learning.

Methodology and Process

For this project, I created a series of seven creative movement dance classes, each based around a different mode of learning. Two groups of nine kindergarten students from the OSU

Childcare Center with little or no previous dance experience participated in this multiple intelligences related dance study (IRB Protocol Number: 2013B0331). All students attended a 25-minute dance class once per week for seven weeks, each week focusing on learning dance movements through a different “intelligence-type.” Although the mode of learning changed each week, the dance steps and material were very similar from class to class. The class structure was also consistent, and began with a short warm-up and class conversation in a circle, followed by a series of movement exercises across the floor and in the center. The class would always conclude with a longer, more complex center combination, combining all of the movements and ideas from the class. As the students exited the dance class, I gave them the opportunity to express themselves/show what they learned through. I entitled this part of the class, “free dance.” During each lesson, I used a small hand drum to provide musical accompaniment for the students. After the completion of this study, I arranged my original lesson plans, along with my observations and conclusions, into a binder for future use for myself, and the Department of Dance.

Lesson Descriptions

Week One: Musical/Rhythmic Intelligence

I chose Musical/Rhythmic intelligence for the first lesson to immediately introduce the students to the relationship between music and dance, while catering the lesson towards a musical way of learning. I led the group in a short discussion at the start of class, to cover what would be happening over the next few weeks, and also help the students to begin to develop vocabulary around musical concepts – rhythm, beat, and tempo. We also generated some examples of rhythms in real life (i.e. heartbeat).

After the discussion, I directed the group to stand up in a circle to play a short, improvisational “Name Game.” Each child said his/or name while doing a movement, and the

group repeated both the movement and the name back to them. As another warm-up exercise, we sang the “ABC Song,” repeated the song at different tempos, and mimicked the letters of the alphabet with our bodies as we were singing.

For the exploration part of the class, I directed the students to return to standing in a circle, and allowed them to each create their own rhythms, one at a time in 4/4 time. The students took turns sharing their rhythms around the circle, and the group repeated the rhythms back. Next, the students spread out in the space, and I introduced skipping, marching, running on your toes, and walking; I played the appropriate rhythms to match the movements as the students learned each traveling step. Our next task was to play a game of matching movements to rhythms across the floor. I would play a rhythm, and, one at a time, the students had to figure out what dance step matched the rhythm I was currently playing, and execute that step across the floor. After the students tried clapping rhythms to match my movement, I would perform one of the dance steps we learned, and they clapped out the rhythm.

To complete the class, I taught the students a movement phrase that combined the steps and rhythms we learned in the first part of class. They did the combination as a group, and we played with different tempos. The students enjoyed trying the combination in “super-slow motion” and “warp-speed.”

Findings:

The students responded well to vocalization (singing) while moving (ABC exercise). Creating “name dances” was more difficult for some than for others – I attribute this to the fact that this was many of the students’ first time dancing, and they were feeling shy and self-conscious. The students were able to easily recognize rhythms and tempo and perform the steps associated with them. Having the dancers match the rhythms that I was demonstrating was a

great test to evaluate if they were paying attention to the dance/music connection, or if they were just watching their fellow classmates. Most of the students were able to keep a steady beat, and were able to make up their own rhythms in 4/4 time without any trouble. The students were currently enrolled in a music class, so they said that applying their knowledge of music to dance was “tons of fun.”

Things to Improve:

I would not do the name game for this age group again, unless it was for a class with previous dance experience. Starting out with advanced cognitive-physical practice was too advanced.

Week Two: Mathematical/Logical Intelligence

During our beginning circle discussion, I talked to the students about counting, adding, and subtracting. Working with numbers excited them, as they were beginning to learn basic arithmetic in their kindergarten classroom. To warm up, we stood in a circle and started an improvisational exploration of counts. Their task was to melt to the ground in 8 counts, and return to standing in 8 counts. We repeated the exercise with fewer and fewer counts until the dancers were melting down to the ground in 1 count. Our next exercise explored counts through shapes. I asked the students to create 4 stationary shapes in time with the drum beats, and then make 4 shapes that moved through space. We repeated the exercise with 2 counts, 8 counts, and 3 counts.

For the exploration portion of the class, we practiced grouping via counting, adding and subtracting. I asked the students to do a specific movement (skipping, marching, etc.) to form a group of a specific number. The number and step changed each round.

In order to get the students moving across the floor, I modified the warm-up improvisation exercise from the beginning of class to become a traveling exercise. The students had 8 counts to get from one side of the room to the other. The number of counts changed each time they went across the floor. They quickly learned that the fewer the counts, the faster their movements needed to be.

The final combination consisted of a sequence of steps that were each associated with a specific count. We went through the combination as a group, saying each count as we did each movement associated with it. After successfully completing the combination, I split the group in half and the dancers performed the combination for each other. I also tested the students' memories by asking them to repeat some of the movements out of order (e.g. "Now just show me counts 3, 6, and 8).

Findings:

The students were currently working on adding and subtracting in their kindergarten classroom, so applying previous knowledge into the grouping center exercise was exciting for them. Associating a movement with a specific number was helpful for the students when trying to remember the longer center phrase. Playing with duration [moving slower across the floor in a specific number of counts] was difficult for them at first, since the students tended to move quickly, but once they understood that they were meant to use all of their counts to cross the room, they succeeded. All of the students could associate specific movements with specific counts, and could execute them on demand.

Things to Improve:

If I were to repeat this lesson plan again, I would play more with the idea of adding and subtracting dancers by layering on that challenge to the center phrase [e.g. add 2 dancers to the

group on count 4, add in 1 more on count 7...]. Adding and subtracting dancers throughout the center phrase would not only simulate the entrances and exits typically present in performance choreography, but it would also require the students to be attentive to counts, and aware of how many dancers were on stage at any one time. I think this would help make connections between the center grouping exercise and the final combination, while giving the students a taste of what more complex choreography can entail.

Week Three: Interpersonal Intelligence:

For our circle discussion this week, we talked about groups and generated some examples of groups in nature (flocks of birds, schools of fish, etc.). To warm up, the students stood up in the circle, took hands, and worked as a group to change levels, rotate, and reach to different corners of the room.

For our across the floor exploration, I asked the students to move from one side of the room to the other, as a unit, without talking or any other verbal cues or interactions. They did this exercise as a flock of birds, a school of fish, and a pride of lions. Next, I arranged the group into pairs, and asked them to attempt to chassé across the floor, staying in line with their partner. We repeated the same exercise with rolling from side of the room to the other.

Our next exploratory game was a version of “Follow the Leader.” Each student got 16 counts to be the line leader, and lead the group around the space doing a dance step from previous week. The rest of the group followed in a single-file line.

The final combination consisted of each student creating a shape or movement, showing it to the group, and adding it into a sequence of student-generated movements. This sequence was followed by some unison movement that I had choreographed ahead of time that

incorporated movements from previous weeks, as well as some of the level changes the students explored during the circle warm up.

Findings:

The students did not prefer to move together as a unit. They wanted to revert to their own movement tendencies and dance individually. Working in groups of two across the floor was more successful than group work, because the students chose a friend with whom they knew and trusted. Overall, team work and unison movement were not well executed or received. This surprised me, as I know that sharing and team work are both values that are typically cultivated in kindergarten classrooms. Young children do tend to be more self-centered than older children, which leads me to believe that age largely contributed to the lack of interest and success in group work.

Things to Improve:

I think this lesson would be more successful with an older age group - students who have learned more team building skills. I would also lay some ground rules for the class during the beginning circle discussion, to create a respectful, team-working environment.

Week Four: Verbal/Linguistic Intelligence

For this class, I bypassed the beginning discussion and went right into the warm up exercises. We began by sitting in a circle, singing the “Itsy Bitsy Spider” song, and adding the hand motions along with the vocals. We experimented with changing the tempo of the song, and with embodying the hand motions more fully by engaging the entire body and playing with levels. To incorporate the dance steps learned in previous weeks, I held up flashcards with different written movement words: skip, walk, run, melt, crawl, etc. The students executed each

movement as it was visually revealed to them around the space. The movement words were both written on the flashcard, and verbalized by myself so that all students were able to participate.

For the improvisational exploration, I verbally prompted the students with a variety of adjectives to embody, including: heavy, light, sharp, smooth, stuck, liquid, etc. They were allowed to move freely around the space, as long as they were adhering to the prompts. The students and I also generated some examples of the adjectives: heavy = elephant, smooth = melted chocolate, sharp = needles, tree branches.

The across the floor and culminating combination provided opportunities for the students to vocalize and dance at the same time. While moving across the floor in pairs, the students were asked to say the steps in the combination (a series of skips and marches) as they executed them. For the final combination, I taught the students a dance to the “Happy Birthday” song (Warner/Chappell, 1988), in which each word in the song had a specific movement associated with it.

Findings:

The students were skilled at singing and moving at the same time (“Itsy Bitsy Spider”), but it was harder for them to say what they were doing as they were doing it (skipping and walking across the floor). Hearing words and translating them into improvisation movement was successful, but only once the students named and brainstormed examples of what those words could describe (examples: smooth = melted chocolate). Only a small portion of the children could read, so having the flashcards visible wasn’t helpful for the majority of the group – verbal cuing worked best.

Things to Improve:

Next time, I would eliminate some of the exercises in the class. I had too much planned and not enough time to dig deep into the subject matter. If I were to do this class again, with the same student population, I would eliminate the flashcards, since most of the children were not able to read, and subtract the across the floor exercises. I would keep the adjective improvisation, but change the structure slightly. I think the exercise would be most effective if I gave the students the opportunity to come up with their own adjectives after hearing and embodying some of mine.

Week Five: Body/Kinesthetic Intelligence

Throughout the class, created shapes with their bodies to explore the many ranges of kinesphere, as well as exploration of levels and quality of movement. The majority of the time, the class was lead with guided improvisation. For the warm up, I asked the students to create different shapes with their bodies (curved, twisted, straight, etc.), and then to play with their range of kinesphere by creating smaller shapes (close to their centers), and larger shapes (reaching as far away from their center as possible).

This exploration of shapes and kinespheres continued across the floor and in the center combination, which gave the students a chance to create their own dance phrase and perform it for each other.

Findings:

The children were able to generate great verbal examples of curved, straight, and twisted shapes, but it was difficult for them to embody some of them. Straight shapes were easy for most, twisted shapes were more difficult, and curved shapes were the most challenging. All of the students were able to dance in a small kinesphere (close to themselves), and a large kinesphere (away from themselves), but alternating between the two was difficult. Switching

back and forth between doing a traveling step (skipping, walking, running...) and creating stationary shapes was challenging for the students. I attribute this to the fact that they are still young and learning about how their bodies can move in space and how to be physically and mentally aware of that range.

Things to Improve:

Going forward, I would allow for more time for the students to dig into and explore the possibilities of curved shapes. Since these were not as natural for them, they need more time to develop. Mirrors would be useful for this particular class, so that the students can see what shapes they are making.

Week Six: Visual/Spatial Intelligence

After briefly discussing pathways and directions in a circle, I lead the children in an exploratory and interactive game to warm-up. The children stood in a circle, and, one at a time, crossed the circle to another dancer in a specific pathway (straight, circular, or zig-zag), in the dance step of their choice. Once they reached the dancer across the circle from them, the two students high-fived, and switched places.

To further explore the investigation of spatial pathways, the students followed behind me in a single-file line around the space, and we followed different pathways in space as a group. The students then explored these paths by themselves through improvisation on a diagonal pathway. We also explored moving backwards and sideways while practicing the dance steps from previous weeks. To conclude the center work, we played a game of “Visual Red Light Green Light,” which consisted of me holding up colored flash cards to visually tell the students what tempo to use for their improvisation (green = fast, yellow = slow, red = stop, blue = dancers’ choice).

The final phrase of the class required the students to execute quick changes of directions, move in different pathways in space, and use different levels. We repeated this combination using the flashcards and prompts for tempo. This phrase was different for the students as the phrases from previous classes had all used only one facing and pathway.

Findings:

With the exception of traveling forward in space, changing directions and facings, especially with speed, was difficult for this group. They would often get confused, and would revert to just traveling forward. The dancers were able to do the “follow-the-leader” game well - I believe this to be true because they are constantly asked to walk in a single-file line when traveling to and from their classroom. Adding in the visual component of the flashcards was successful. Once the students had the concept of the traveling through space, it excited them to have to always be on the lookout for a new flashcard and to change their tempo accordingly.

Things to Improve:

Finding new ways to help the students feel more comfortable traveling in different directions (backwards, sideways) would be helpful for this lesson. The students are not yet aware of their bodies and their relationship to the space around them, so they need extra assistance in finding pathways through the space.

Week Seven: Intrapersonal Intelligence

The intrapersonal-focused lesson was different from previous weeks. The structure was modified, and I incorporated visual art into the class. To begin, I asked each student to choose a marker that reflected their current emotion. I gave each child a piece of paper, and instructed them to spread out in the space, and draw a depiction of their emotion. When everyone had finished, we returned to the circle, and, one at a time, each student showed the class their picture,

verbally expressed the emotion, and created a shape to represent it. Each student was given a chance to embody their depicted emotion across the floor. We repeated this exercise with different drawing prompts, including “what you feel while doing your favorite activity”, “how you would feel on your birthday,” and “how you would feel if your family had to move away.” We did not have a final combination for this lesson – instead, we had a short group discussion about how it felt to express emotions on paper and also through movement.

Findings:

The students enjoyed taking a few moments to themselves to express how they were feeling/their favorite things on paper, and then through movement. Children are in touch with their emotions, so it was exciting to see them dive into the exercise. I believe that this was the most successful lesson plan of the seven. There was a lot of room for improvisation and personal expression, while still maintaining structure. Because the students were so excited and inspired by the material in this lesson, I think that all young children’s dance classes should allow for self-reflection.

Things to Improve:

I would like to try this lesson with older students, possibly with more complex prompts, and/or time for journaling and self-reflection. Providing space for self-expression through improvisation seems to be an effective way to encourage students to get in touch with themselves - I want to make sure that I add in an element to facilitate this kind of emotional exploration into all of my courses.

Conclusions

Over the course of the study, I discovered that this group of kindergarten students were more musical/rhythmic, mathematical/logical, intrapersonal intelligent than they were

verbal/linguistic, visual/spatial, body/kinesthetic, and interpersonal intelligent. I attribute these findings to a number of things. I believe that because the students were learning about rhythm, tempo, and basic music skills in their kindergarten classroom, applying those concepts to movement was exciting and effective for them. The same seems to be true for the mathematical/logical intelligence. I also think that because young children are in touch with their own feelings, emotions, and inner workings that expressing them via the intrapersonal exercises we did during the final lesson felt natural and fun for them. The students were also successful in creating shapes with their bodies (particularly straight shapes) as well as associating visual images with movement.

Conversely, the intelligences that the students seemed to be lacking were verbal/linguistic, body/kinesthetic, and interpersonal. Since the students were not fully literate, and were still in the process of learning to articulate their thoughts, incorporating those skills into a movement setting was difficult for them. Controlling their bodies by switching between large and small motor movements was difficult for the students. I attribute this to the fact that they are growing at a rapid rate at this stage in their lives, and have not had time to be able to fully develop the necessary motor skills for complex movement. Working as a group was also a challenge. In my experience, young children are focused on themselves, and haven't developed the team-working and sharing skills that older children have; which surprised me, as I had assumed that sharing and team work had been taught and cultivated by the time students reached kindergarten age. After talking with the classroom instructor, I learned that this was still a new concept for them.

Overall, I was pleased with how the children responded to the dance classes, and hope that they gained some knowledge about themselves as movers, and some knowledge about how to behave in a group class setting.

Artistic Statement and Moving Forward

This study challenged me to think outside of my comfort zone when generating material for the dance classes. Looking back over Gardner's descriptions of his various intelligences before creating each lesson plan was tedious at times and occasionally provided road blocks, but I feel that forcing myself to devise lessons that catered to different intelligences helped to not only be more creative in my lesson planning, but to also be more aware of my student population and their tendencies and needs.

I have already noticed changes in my personal teaching style that reflect my new knowledge. Now when I am teaching a phrase to a group of students, I make sure to deliver the material in as many ways as possible, by addressing the different intelligences present in the class. For example, instead of just counting (mathematical/logical) along with the combination, I am physically demonstrating to the class (visual/spatial), I point out the musical accents (musical/rhythmic) while providing multiple descriptions of the movements I am executing (verbal/linguistic). I also make sure to allow time for students to work in groups when appropriate address a correction (interpersonal), while also allowing self-reflection after a combination (intrapersonal). I also now enjoy creating combinations that use a variety of sizes of kinespheres (body/kinesthetic), and watching how the students react to moving close to themselves as well as far away from their core.

I hope to continue to study the relationship between multiple intelligences and dance throughout my teaching career with a variety of age groups. I am particularly interested in

looking at how middle-school aged students react to different methods of communication. I am curious to see if there are any differences between the students, since they will have all been through several years of academic schooling. I believe that supporting and cultivating multiple intelligences is vital for students to hone in on how they learn best. I look forward to continuing to learn about Howard Gardner's theories, and how they can influence my both my teaching and my learning.

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Appendix

Lesson Plans from the Study

Kerry Dibble
 Dance BFA Senior Project
 Autumn Semester 2013
 The Ohio State University

Week 1 Curriculum – Musical/Rhythmic

Materials: Small Hand Drum

25 minute class

- Introductions
 - o Me
 - This is my senior project (explain)
 - This is what we'll be doing the next seven weeks
- Name Game
 - o In a circle
 - Say your name slowly, and do a movement to associate with it
 - Everyone repeats the movement in unison while saying the name
- Movement to song
 - o Head, shoulders, knees and toes, knees and toes
 - o ABC's
 - Sing the song and draw the letters out in the air
- Rhythm intro
 - o Does anyone know what rhythm means?
 - It means...
 - A sequence of sounds that have a constant beat
 - Real life examples:
 - o Heartbeat
- Warm Up
 - o Stand in a circle
 - o Everyone creates a rhythm, one at a time going around the circle
 - o Once a rhythm is created by a student, the rest of the group repeats it back
- Traveling
 - o Learn simple dance steps in the center
 - Skipping
 - Marching
 - Walking
 - Running lightly on your toes
 - Play the rhythms of each of the steps on your drum while the students do them
 - o Across the floor
 - Play one of the four rhythms, and have the students try to pick the correct movement to match it

- One at a time, across the floor in a diagonal – each student will get a different rhythm
- Demonstrate a rhythm of moving, and have the kids try and clap it themselves
 - Skipping
 - Marching
 - Walking
 - Running lightly on your toes
- Center Phrase to be done in small groups
 - 4 marches in place (counts 1-4)
 - 4 jumps in place (counts 5-8)
 - 4 jumps around in a circle (counts 1-4)
 - Arms go up and around – like a flower blooming (5-8)
 - 8 counts of kitting shapes on every 2 counts
 - (improvisational)
- Do the phrase with many different songs
 - Slow
 - “Super fast”
 - No tempo – let the dancers make their own timing choices
- Ask the kids how that felt – which speed was their favorite?
- Free dance
 - One at a time, the students have 8 counts of solo improvisational time to travel across the floor and explore their own movement style

Findings:

- The students responded well to vocalization (singing) while moving (ABC’s)
- Creating “name dances” was more difficult for some than for others – I attribute this to the fact that this was many of the students’ first time dancing.
- The students were able to easily recognize beats and perform the steps associated with them
- Having the dancers create rhythms to match the steps that I was doing was a great test to see if they were really paying attention to the dance/music connection, or if they were just watching their fellow classmates.
- Most of the students were able to keep a steady beat, and were able to make up their own rhythms in 4/4 time without any trouble
- The students are currently enrolled in a music class, so they said that applying their knowledge of music to dance was “tons of fun.”

Things to change for the future:

- I would not do the name game for this age group again, unless it was for a class with previous dance experience. Putting them on the spot right off the bat was not helpful for them.

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Dance BFA Senior Project
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The Ohio State University

Week 2 Curriculum: Mathematical/Logical

Materials: Small Hand Drum

25 minute class

- Warm up
 - Circle time questions
 - Who likes math?
 - What have you learned so far in school? Counting? Adding? Subtracting?
 - What's the biggest number you can think of?
 - Transitions in and out of the floor
 - Find a way to get down to the floor in 8 counts
 - Use ALL 8 counts! Don't rush!
 - Get back up from the floor in 8 counts
 - Repeat in 8 counts again
 - 4 counts (repeat 2 times)
 - 2 counts (repeat 4 times)
 - 1 count (repeat 4 times)
 - Shapes and counting
 - Simple exercise using improvisation (making shapes with the body)
 - 4 stationary shapes
 - 4 moving shapes
 - 8 stationary shapes
 - 8 moving shapes
 - 2 stationary shapes
 - 2 moving shapes
 - 3 stationary shapes
 - 3 moving
 - (can repeat with any number)
 - Groups – simple counting and grouping exercise (play appropriate rhythms to accompany)
 - Start spread out in the space
 - Run to groups of 3
 - Skip to groups of 2
 - Crawl to groups of 4
 - Tip toe to groups of 5
 - Creep to groups of 2
 - Gallop to groups of 1
 - Repeat, but with body parts
 - Example: Run to a group of 3 and touch elbows
- Across the floor
 - Traveling exercise
 - In groups of 3, take 8 counts to travel across to the other side of the room

- Improvisational, but suggest the steps they already know (skipping, crawling, marching...)
 - Same in 4 counts
 - Same in 2 counts
 - Same in 1 count
 - Simple exercise
 - 4 gallops
 - 4 skips
- Center Phrase
 - Have the children count with the movements, do in different size groupings
 - Phrase
 - Right arm up 1
 - Right leg out to the side 2
 - Hold 3
 - Drop to the ground (frog position) 4
 - Crawl forward 5, 6
 - Stand up 7
 - Arms up 8 (jazz hands)
 - Do at different speeds
 - Add on...
 - Jump to the left 1
 - Clap 2
 - Turn back to the right 3,4
 - Shapes on 5-8
- Free dance
 - One at a time, the students have 8 counts of solo improvisational time to travel across the floor and explore their own movement style

Findings:

- The students were currently working on adding and subtracting in the kindergarten classroom, so translating that into the group exercise was exciting for them (application of previous knowledge).
- Associating a movement with a specific count (number) was helpful for the students when trying to remember the longer center phrase.
- Playing with duration (moving across the floor in a specific number of counts) was a little bit difficult at first, since the students tended to move quickly, but once they understood that they were meant to use all of their counts to make it from one side of the room to the other, they were more successful.

Things to change for the future:

- Play more with the idea of adding and subtracting dancers by layering on that challenge to the center phrase (e.g. add 2 dancers to the group on count 4, add in 1 more on count 7...)

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Week 3 Curriculum – Interpersonal

Materials: Small Hand Drum

25 minute class

- Circle time
 - o Unison
 - o Talk about it – does anyone know what that word means?
 - Doing this as a unit – as a group
 - Working together
 - o Any examples of this in real life?
 - Schools of fish
 - Flock of birds
- Warm-up
 - o Circle exercise
 - Reach up, down, side, side
 - Hold hands; make the circle bigger, smaller...
 - Now do this without me, without pulling on each other
 - Can you change levels without saying anything to each other?
 - How about rotating the circle?
- Across the floor
 - o Traveling across the floor in a group
 - Without counts or words, how can you work together to move as a group from one side of the room to the other side?
 - Now do it as a school of fish
 - Flock of birds
 - What other animals travel in groups?
 - o (Lions, Elephants...)
 - o Working in pairs across the floor
 - Chasse across the floor with a partner, but stay in line with them the entire time
 - Rolling
 - How can you do this with a partner across the floor without hitting them?
 - o Talking about what the others did across the floor – what did you see?
- Center work
 - o Follow The Leader with Numbers
 - When I call your number, you become the group leader, and you get to decide what step we do (skipping, running, walking, marching, tip toeing, crawling...)
 - Everyone else must follow behind the leader in a single file line
- Center phrase (groups of 8 if possible)
 - o Each student gets a number

- Each student makes up one move/shape and shows it to the group
 - When that number is called, that is what the group will do
- Learn 8 counts of my movement
 - Lunge forward 1
 - Arms up 2
 - Arms out to second position and leg up to passé parallel 3
 - Hold 4
 - Turn to the right (traveling) 5 and 6
 - Jump up 7, down 8
- Right after they complete the 8 counts of choreographed movement, then the numbers get called out so that the student-choreographed is added onto the end
- Free dance
 - One at a time, the students have 8 counts of solo improvisational time to travel across the floor and explore their own movement style

Findings:

- The students didn't seem thrilled to have to work together to move as a unit in the beginning. They very much wanted to revert to their own movement tendencies and dance by themselves.
- Working in groups of two across the floor was more successful than moving across the floor in groups. I think this is because the students were allowed to choose who they went across the floor with, so they chose someone they were good friends with who they knew they could work with easily.
- Overall, team work and unison movement were not well executed or received.

Things to change for the future:

- I think this lesson would be more successful with an older age group (students who have learned more team working skills).

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Week 4 Curriculum – Verbal/Linguistic

Materials: Small Hand Drum

25 minute class

- Warm up
 - Itsy bitsy spider
 - Just learn the words
 - Then do the motions
 - Do it at varying speeds, using different levels, and even traveling around the space
 - Flash cards
 - Have several flashcards prepared, each with a different movement word on it
 - Walking, Skipping, Running, Marching, Tip toe-ing, crawling...
 - Show the flash card, read what's on the card in unison, and begin moving in the format that is written on the card
 - Incorporate words
 - Use verbal cues to vary the speed of the movements (fast, slow motion, freeze, your choice...)
 - Words – Improvisational exploration
 - Move the way these words sound
 - Light
 - Heavy
 - Sharp
 - Smooth
 - Stuck
 - Free
 - Frozen
 - Liquid
- Across the floor
 - Take the improvisational exercise with adjectives across the floor in groups of 3
 - 4 walks, 4 skips one at a time on the diagonal
 - Say it as you do it!
 - Run and leap, and when you leap, say your name (one at a time on the diagonal)
 - Repeat again with favorite food
- Final combination
 - Happy Birthday song
 - Happy – arms up
 - Birthday – right arm, left arm
 - To – jump forward with hands on legs
 - You – Arms circle up, around, and down, hands shaking
 - Repeat

- Happy – crouch down
- Birthday – Jump up, jump again
- Dear – slide to the right
- Name – your own shape or move
- Happy – arms up
- Birthday – right arm, left arm
- To – arms up, rise up on toes
- You – arms circle up, around, and down hands shaking, lowering down
- Free dance
 - One at a time, the students have 8 counts of solo improvisational time to travel across the floor and explore their own movement style

Findings:

- The students were skilled at singing and moving at the same time (Itsy Bitsy Spider), but it was harder for them to say what they were doing as they were doing it (skipping and walking across the floor).
- Hearing words and translating them into improvisation movement was successful, but only once the students named and heard examples of what those words could describe (example: smooth = melted chocolate, sharp = needles, tree branches).
- Only a small portion of the children could read, so having the flashcards visible wasn't helpful for the majority of the group – verbal cuing worked best.

Things to change for the future:

- Next time, I would eliminate some of the exercises in the class. There was a lot going on, and not enough time to really dig very deep into any of the subject matter. If I were to do this class again, I would eliminate the flashcard exercise, and the across the floor movements.

Kerry Dibble
 Dance BFA Senior Project
 Autumn Semester 2013
 The Ohio State University

Week 5 Curriculum – Body/Kinesthetic

Materials: Small Hand Drum

25 minute class

- Circle time discussion topics
 - o Shapes
 - What kinds of shapes can you think of?
 - Curved shapes, twisted shapes, straight shapes
 - What are some things in real life that reflect those shapes?
 - o Can we act these shapes out with our bodies?
 - Short seated improvisation creating the shapes previously discussed with our upper bodies
- Warm up and exploration – guided improvisation
 - o Curved shapes, straight shapes, twisted shapes
 - 8 counts of each (each drum beat = a different shape)
 - o Now do them really big – far away from yourself
 - o Now do them really small – really close to yourself
 - o Can we do them on the floor?
 - o In the middle?
 - o Up high?
 - o (still doing 8 counts of each kind of shape for each task)
 - o Can we do really heavy shapes?
 - o Really light shapes?
 - o Really sharp shapes
 - o Really soft shapes
 - o Really squiggly shapes
 - Mix it up
 - Try switching types of shapes every 4 counts
 - Every 2 counts
- Traveling around the space
 - o 8 skips around the room
 - o 8 curved shapes in place
 - o Repeat with twisted and straight
 - o Try with marching, slow-motion running, galloping
 - How does changing the steps before the shapes change the shapes themselves?
 - Does tempo change the clarity of the shapes?
- Final combination
 - o Remember the objects we talked about at the beginning of class? Let's create a dance together using those objects to inspire our own movements
 - Each kid comes up with one object that is twisted, curved, or straight, and we put that together into a phrase

- Do it as a group in a circle (so that everyone can see what's going on), then split into two smaller groups and perform for each other
- Free dance
 - One at a time, the students have 8 counts of solo improvisational time to travel across the floor and explore their own movement style

Findings:

- The children were able to generate great verbal examples of curved, straight, and twisted shapes, but it was difficult for them to embody some of them. Straight shapes were easy, twisted shapes were more difficult, and curved shapes were the most challenging.
- All of the students were able to dance in a small kinesphere (close to themselves), and a large kinesphere (away from themselves).
- Switching back and forth between doing a traveling step (skipping, walking, running...) and creating stationary shapes was difficult for the students. I attribute this to the fact that they are still very young and learning about how their bodies can move in space and how to be physically and mentally aware of that range.

Things to change for the future:

- Allow for more time for the students to really dig into and explore the possibilities of curved shapes. Since these were not as natural for them, they need more time to develop.
- Mirrors would be useful for this particular class, so that the students can see what shapes they are making.

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Week 6 Curriculum – Visual/Spatial

Materials: Small Hand Drum, Red, Green, and Yellow flashcards

25 minute class

- Circle time questions
 - o Directions
 - What are directions? How to we use directions in space in every day life?
 - o Pathways
 - What is a good example of a pathway in real life?
 - Driveways, roads, walking trails...
- Warm up
 - o Circle game
 - Children stand in a circle. One student begins traveling in the chosen pathway to a student across the circle from them. When the traveling student reaches the stationary student, they high-five, and switch places. Now the new student repeats the process.
 - Different pathways:
 - Straight
 - Curved
 - Zig zag
 - Do the game once for each pathway – Make sure everyone gets a chance to try the game with each pathway
- Across the floor
 - o Follow the leader (instructor starts as leader)
 - The leader chooses a pathway, and a step to do while they travel in that pathway (example: skipping in a straight pathway). Once the current leader has lead for 4 counts of 8, they run to the back of the line and the next student in line gets a turn.
 - o Skipping from corner to corner (diagonal direction)
 - Remind the students that they already know diagonal pathways – we do them every week from corner-to-corner!
 - o Marching from back to front (backwards!)
 - Try marching in lines from the front of the room to the back. Try and maintain a straight pathway, even though you are moving backwards!
 - o Tip toe-ing from side to side
 - Tip-toeing from one side of the room to the other, while keeping the body
 - o Add in color to any or all of these exercises:
 - Hold up the RED flashcard to tell the group to freeze
 - Hold up the GREEN flashcard to tell the group to gog
 - Hold up the YELLOW flashcard to tell the group to move in slow motion
- Final combination
 - o 4 marches forward

- 4 marches backward
- 4 bunny hops side, arms coming up
- 4 bunny hops other side, arms going down
- 8 counts to make a circular pathway around yourself
- Start with arms up, shuffle back on a diagonal getting lower, arms coming down for 8
- Free dance
 - One at a time, the students have 8 counts of solo improvisational time to travel across the floor and explore their own movement style

Findings:

- With the exception of traveling forward in space, changing directions and facings was difficult for this group. They would often get confused, and would revert to just traveling forward.
- They were able to do the “follow-the-leader” game very well. I believe this to be true because they are constantly asked to walk in a single-file line when going to and from their classroom.
- Adding in the visual component of the flashcards was a successful idea. Once the students already had the concept of the traveling combinations down, it excited them to have to always be on the lookout for a new flashcard.

Things to change for the future:

- Find new ways to help the students feel more comfortable traveling in different directions (backwards, sideways). This could be done in the format of follow the leader, but maintaining the correct pathway and facing.

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Week 7 Curriculum – Intrapersonal
Materials: Small Hand Drum
25 minute class

- Circle time
 - o Today we're going to focus on YOU. Your favorite things, your feelings...
- Exploration:
 - o Everyone take ONE marker and ONE piece of paper
 - o Spread out on the floor so you are by yourself, and draw your favorite animal
 - Now come back to the circle when you're ready
 - Can we act out these animals one at a time?
 - Can we move it across the floor?
- Repeat with how you are feeling today – use a color that relates
 - o Everyone move how they are feeling today in the circle
 - o Then across the floor
- Repeat last time with your favorite thing to do
 - o Can you make a short dance or movement about that thing?
 - o Then across the floor
- Repeat with “how you feel on your birthday” and “how you would feel if your family had to move” etc.

- There was no culminating combination or phrase for this class. We just focused on individuality and time to reflect on ourselves. We did some group conversation about similarities between the drawings and movement.

Findings:

- The students really enjoyed taking a few moments to themselves to express how they were feeling/their favorite things on paper, and then through movement. Children are very in touch with themselves and their emotions, so it was really exciting to see them really dive in to the exercise.
- This was the most successful lesson plan of the seven, in my opinion. Lots of room for improvisation and personal expression, while still maintaining structure. This makes me think that all young children's dance classes should allow for the self-reflection. Maybe for older dancers, this would mean writing or journaling.

Things to change for future:

Try this lesson plan with slightly more complex prompts with older students